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STAYING ON... FOR NOW: DRAVID EXTENDS CONTRACT AS HEAD COACH

Rahul Dravid, whose contract had expired after the World Cup earlier this month, has signed on to continue in his capacity as head coach

NO ADVERTISEMENTS THIS TIME

While Dravid wasn't too keen on continuing — he was noncommittal when asked about his stance following the World Cup final loss — the BCCI didn't put out any advertisements for the role of head coach. Dravid will remain in the hot seat for now with Vikram Rathour, Paras Mhambrey and T Dilip for support. The extended tenure is likely to be till 2024 T20 WC

BIG 6-8 MONTHS IN STORE FOR DRAVID & CO

- Dravid's first big series is a two-match Test series at South Africa next month, a place where they are yet to win one
- After that, they welcome England for a five-match Test series at home. After next year's IPL, the team will be off to feature in the T20 World Cup in West Indies and the USA | P19

I am genuinely proud of the culture we have set in the dressing room. It's a culture that stands resilient, whether in moments of triumph or adversity

—Dravid, after signing the contract

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US shares granular details of the alleged plot to kill Pannun

Accused Nikhil Gupta in US detention, his handler alleged to be ex-CRPF official

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

DAYS after Western media reports claimed the US had accused India of orchestrating a plot to kill Khalistani radical Gurupatwant Singh Pannun, an American national, the identity of the accused was made public.

US Attorney Damian Williams announced the filing of murder-for-hire charges against Nikhil Gupta, accusing him of hiring a hitman to bump off Pannun. The charges in a superseding indictment were unsealed on Wednesday in a US District Court for Southern District of New York.

Czech authorities arrested Gupta, 52, on June 30 and extradited him to the US, where he is in prison. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Gupta's handler, the indictment said, is an "Indian government agency employee who has variously described himself as a "Senior Field Officer" with responsibilities in "Security Management" and "Intelligence," and who also has referenced previously serving in India's Central Reserve Police Force and receiving "officer training" in "battle craft" and "weapons." He directed the plot from India, Williams alleged.

Gupta is said to be involved in international narcotics and weapons trafficking. The hitman Gupta hired was an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration officer. The deal was done for $1,00,000 and he was paid $30,000 in two instalments as advance, the indictment further claimed.

The hit job was timed after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's summit meeting with US President Joe Biden in June.

Earlier in the day, India announced that it has constituted a committee to look into the issues the US had raised on the Pannun case.

"It is informed that on 18 November 2023, the Government of India constituted a high-level Enquiry Committee to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter," said Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Arindam Bagchi.

HOW IT IS TIED TO NIJJAR

On June 18, Hardeep Singh Nijjar was murdered in Canada. On or about June 19, Gupta told the purported hitman that Nijjar "was also the target" and "we have so many targets," the indictment claimed. Next day, Gupta's handler told him bumping off Pannun is priority

DECISION ON CBI PROBE

HC allows DKS to withdraw pleas in DA case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE High Court of Karnataka on Wednesday permitted Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to withdraw his petition as well as the appeal filed by him questioning the sanction given by the previous BJP government to the CBI to prosecute him for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income as the very sanction has been withdrawn by the present Congress government.

A division bench of Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale and Justice Krishna S Dixit passed the order after senior advocate Kapil Sibal and AG Shashikiran Shetty, on behalf of the state, placed the government order issued on November 28, withdrawing the sanction given to the CBI on September 25, 2019, by the then BJP government.

At this stage, the court orally expressed its concern and asked the AG, "As we all know, we accept the rule of continuity of governance. Even there may be a change in the government. If this change is effected every time, will it not affect the rule of continuity of governance?"

To this, Sibal submitted that Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act is very clear that consent is required for investigation. If the CBI feels it has jurisdiction and power, it can proceed further, he said. Senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi and Uday Holla, appearing for Shivakumar, submitted that the petition filed before the single judge, which upheld the sanction, and the appeal filed by Shivakumar against the single judge's order are infructuous as the sanction has been withdrawn by the present government. P4

16th finance commission gets Cabinet's go-ahead

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the 16th Finance Commission, which will make recommendations on sharing of tax revenues between the Centre and states for the five-year period commencing April 1, 2026. The 15th Finance Commission's recommendations are valid up to March 31, 2026. According to a release, the 16th commission's chairmanship and members will be notified later.

The ToR broadly outlines three major areas on which the commission will make suggestions. The commission will determine the formula for distributing the Centre's tax revenues to states and allocate funds between states. It will also address grants-in-aid to states and the resources of panchayats and municipalities.

EXPRESS READ

Injured toddler 'made to wait' at NIMHANS dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

DUE to the alleged negligence of doctors and other staff at NIMHANS hospital, a one-and-a-half-year-old boy, who was rushed from Hassan to Bengaluru in zero traffic after he suffered head injuries, died soon after he was taken to the emergency ward on Wednesday.

The parents of the boy and ambulance crew alleged that they were made to wait for over 90 minutes before the boy was allowed inside the emergency ward. They staged a protest at the hospital seeking action against the hospital authorities.

The deceased, Vijay, fell off the staircase at his house in the morning while playing and suffered head injuries. He was rushed to Hassan government hospital immediately. But the doctors there referred him to NIMHANS. P5

US military plane crashes off Japan coast, 1 dead

Tokyo: A US military Osprey aircraft with eight aboard crashed off the Japanese coast on Wednesday. A crew member recovered from the ocean, was pronounced dead, coast guard officials said.

BRS, Cong, BJP watch as stage set for polling in Telangana today

Hyderabad: After a high decibel campaign that saw the likes of PM Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi and ruling BRS supremo K Chandrasekar Rao addressing a series of meetings crisscrossing the state, the stage is now set for polling on Thursday to elect 119 members to the Telangana Legislative Assembly | P5

WILD FRIENDS

Life-size sculptures of elephants crafted from invasive Lantana camara trees on display outside Vidhana Soudha, to promote human-animal harmony, in Bengaluru on Wednesday | VINOD KUMAR T | PS

Karnataka unveils draft BT, AVGC-XR policies

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE & AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

THE Karnataka government unveiled new draft policies for Biotechnology and Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) at the Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2023, which was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, on Wednesday.

While the AVGC-XR policy aims to develop Karnataka as a powerhouse in AVGC and emphasises on incentivising startups, MSMEs and SC/ST and women entrepreneurs, the biotechnology policy proposes to support high-tech biotech clusters of up to 10 acres and aims to set up a greenfield Bio Foundry under the PPP model. It also promotes the state as the next global clinical trials hub.

Siddaramaiah said, "Karnataka is home to over 5,500 IT/ITeS companies and approximately 750 multinational corporations." P2

Man kills 22-yr-old son for excessive cellphone use

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

ENRAGED over excessive use of cellphone, a man stabbed his 22-year-old son to death at Bannimantap here on Tuesday night.

Police said Aslam Pasha, a resident of Bannimantap, killed his son Umez by stabbing him with a kitchen knife. Umez always used to play games on his mother's cellphone. When Pasha asked Umez to stop using his mother's cellphone, he paid no heed.

This led to an argument between Pasha and Umez. In a fit of rage, Pasha stabbed Umez with the kitchen knife. Umez collapsed on the floor and bled to death, the police said. Soon after the incident, Pasha surrendered before the police. NR police have registered a case.

Nothing should be given for free, says NRN

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

INFOSYS co-founder NR Narayana Murthy on Wednesday suggested that nothing should be given for free. There should be citizens' contribution also towards making our society a better one.

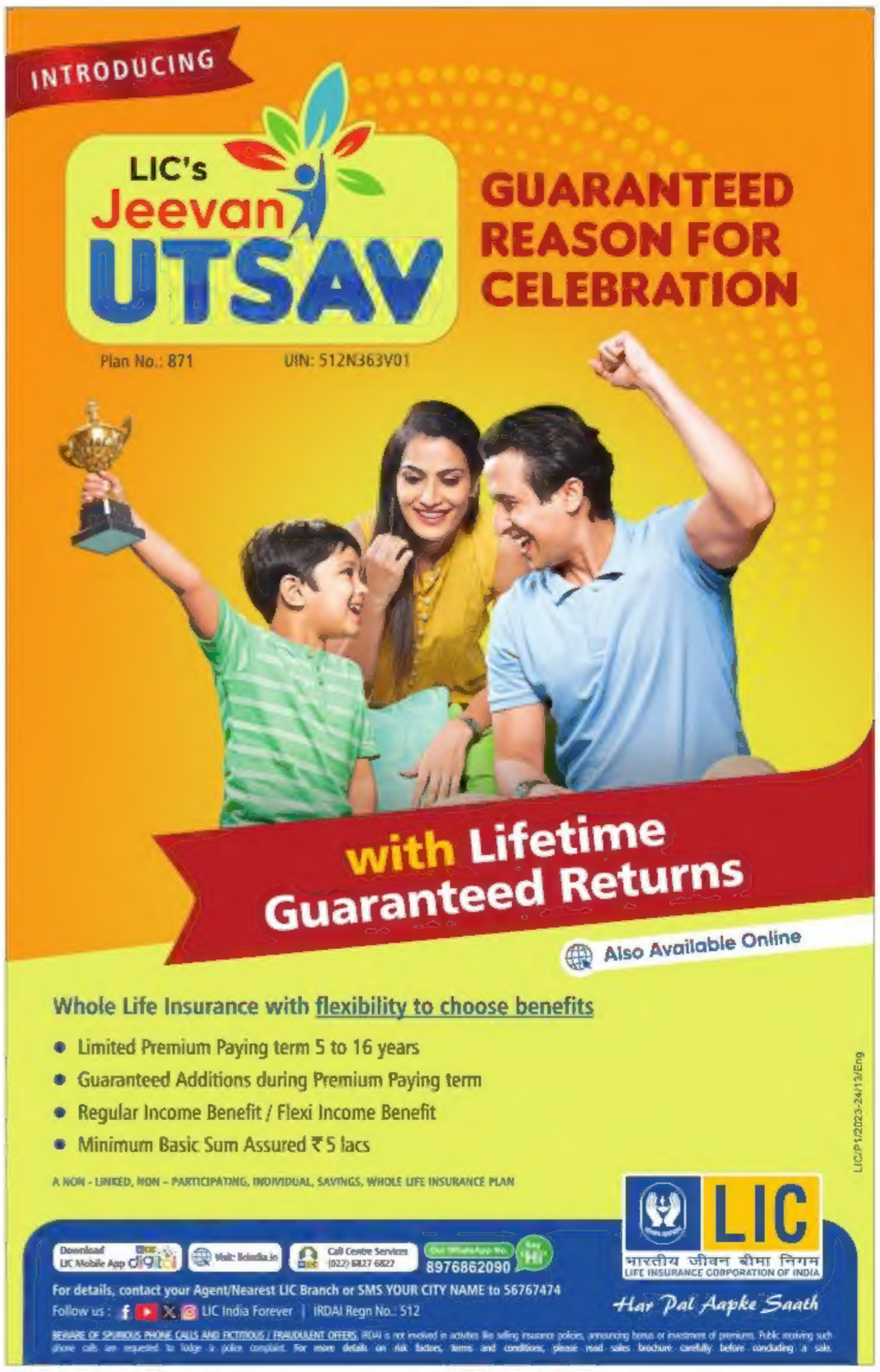
"While I'm not against free services, I think we should expect something in return from those people who receive free subsidies to take a slightly bigger responsibility to make their own future generation better," he said during a fireside chat with Zerodha's co-founder Nikhil Kamath at Bengaluru Tech Summit here.

Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy in conversation with Zerodha co-founder Nikhil Kamath, at the Bengaluru Tech Summit on Wednesday | NAGARJUN GADEKAL

Compassionate capitalism is the only solution for a poor country like India to become prosperous, not socialism or communism, he said. To make Bengaluru more attractive, Murthy suggested the need to open more English schools and improve the city's infrastructure with a sense of alacrity. P2

The first task of a good public governance system for Bengaluru to become even more stronger is we have to provide total freedom to start English medium schools whether we like it or not

NR Narayana Murthy, co-founder, Infosys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